

# The Rail Report

NCDOT Rail Division



January 2015

## Cary Depot chosen by OneRail as national model for good Return on Investment

On December 2, **OneRail Coalition** held a briefing on Capitol Hill to highlight successful passenger and freight projects from around the country that have demonstrated a high return on investment (ROI) of public and private funding for rail projects. The Cary Depot was one of six success stories included in the presentation.

NCDOT Rail Division Facility Consulting Engineer Craig Newton shared with the group how planners foresaw a need 20 plus years ago, and were able to implement phased projects, with limited funding, to meet incremental growth in ridership for the Cary area. With the inaugural of the *Piedmont* in 1995, service returned to Cary with passengers boarding at a platform constructed by NCDOT and town at a cost of \$80,000. There were 4,700 riders that first year. A building was constructed by the town in 1996 and leased to NCDOT for a DMV office and a small Amtrak waiting room. Triangle Transit also contributed construction funding, and its regional buses used the Cary Depot as a park-and-ride facility as well. The building cost was \$750,000. When two daily *Carolinian* stops were added in 1997, ridership topped 10,000 that year.

By 2005, Cary Transit was using the Depot as a hub, and its passengers shared the waiting room with TTA and Amtrak passengers. Ridership had



climbed to nearly 16,000. The next year, a platform was built to serve the Amtrak *Silver Star*, bringing the total number of daily trains serving Cary to six, and ridership surpassed 20,000. The cost of the platform was \$300,000.

In 2008, ridership was 33,000, and DMV relocated to a larger office nearby, freeing up space for a Depot renovation and expansion. NCDOT began designing the station renovations, and when FRA grants for rail infrastructure projects became available in 2009, the Depot renovation plans were already 70% complete. The project received \$2.2 million for a renovation and expansion as part of a \$545 million grant to NCDOT. While construction was underway, a midday *Piedmont* train was added, and with eight trains a day ridership grew to nearly 40,000 passengers a year.



The Cary Depot Renovation project was completed on time and within budget, and opened in September 2011, adding more parking, a larger waiting room, and Amtrak staff for ticketing and baggage handling. The former Amtrak waiting room now serves local and regional bus passengers.

In 2011, prior to the station opening, ridership was 45,000. Two years later, in 2013, ridership nearly doubled to 89,000, making Cary Depot the 4th most active of North Carolina's 16 train stations, behind Raleigh, Charlotte, and Greensboro. While ridership jumped 98% in those two years, revenue jumped an astounding 136%, from \$1.7 million to \$4.2 million. In 2014, the Cary Depot scored second in the nation in Amtrak's Customer Satisfaction Survey.

This is a model the department has used successfully elsewhere in North Carolina, where small initial projects anticipate future, and inevitable, expansion. The North Carolina Train Station Improvement program began in the 1990s, and since then, has demonstrated over and over, that ridership increases dramatically when station facilities are improved.

"Cary Depot ridership growth has far exceeded our expectations. My hope is that this success will inspire other station projects in North Carolina, and other states," said Newton.

## NCVA receives TIGER Grant

The NCVA will improve the Meherrin River Bridge as part of a TIGER grant awarded to modernize the railroad's line and bring the weight rating of the line up to 286,000 pounds per rail car. The project will be a partnership among the FRA, NCDOT, and the NCVA.




## Rail Division's popular Santa Trains return after 3-year hiatus

There were two departures for this year's December 6 Santa Train – one out of Raleigh to Greensboro and back and one out of Charlotte to High Point and back. The Raleigh train was a sellout, with 327 total passengers purchasing tickets. The Charlotte train carried nearly 200 passengers. The Santa Trains were promoted through paid Facebook advertising, marketing at the NC State Fair booth, Our State Magazine and on NCByTrain.org. The feedback from passengers was extremely positive, with almost everyone asking about tickets for next year's train!

Special thanks to the NC Train Host Association volunteers for your assistance on the trains and at the stations, the Gamma Psi Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity who led our passengers in singing carols, and last but not least Santa and Mrs. Claus.



## Ridership & Revenue on NC's Amtrak Service – October 2014 vs. 2013

	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2014	2013	% +/-	2014	2013	% +/-
Piedmont	17,083	16,473	4%	\$356,403	\$312,570	14%
Carolinian	28,240	23,017	23%	\$1,548,987	\$1,088,141	42%

### Train 73 Weekend Schedule Change Coming

Amtrak's January 12 schedule change allows Train 73 passengers to hit the snooze button and sleep an additional 15 minutes on weekends. Train 73 will depart stations 15 minutes later Saturdays and Sundays only. The Monday-Friday schedule remains the same. January 12 falls on a Monday, so the first weekend the new schedule is in effect is January 17 and 18.

Train 73 Schedule	Saturday - Sunday	Monday - Friday
Raleigh	7:00am	6:45am
Cary	7:12am	6:57am
Durham	7:32am	7:17am
Burlington	8:08am	7:53am
Greensboro	8:30am	8:18am
High Point	8:49am	8:34am
Salisbury	9:23am	9:08am
Kannapolis	9:39am	9:24am
Charlotte	10:10am	9:55am

### Two Families Adopted by Rail Division

Rail employees collected more than \$500 to purchase coats, outfits, shoes, socks and toys help five children have a Merry Christmas. The families were adopted through Salvation Army's Christmas Family Program.



### 2014 Rail Division Service Awards

On November 17, service awards were presented by Deputy Secretary for Transit Jeff Mann and Rail Director Paul Worley to the following employees:

**30 years:** David Hinnant, Jack Moore  
**20 years:** Sonya Beatty, Trent Carmon, Lena White  
**15 years:** Larry Capps, Frank Cornett, Katie Dunn, Cheryl Hannah  
**10 years:** Ann Wease, Ryan White  
**2 years:** Alison Boswell



L to R: David Hinnant, Jeff Mann, Ryan White, Ann Wease, Sonya Beatty, Jack Moore, Lena White, Cheryl Hannah, Paul Worley



### RailPlan International salutes Mechanical Services Team in North Carolina on Safety Excellence

On December 8th, RailPlan International's Raleigh, North Carolina, Mechanical Services Team was presented the RPI Award for Safety Excellence in recognition of the team's outstanding safety performance in maintaining an injury-free workplace for more than 428 days. RailPlan's team of 30 supervisors, mechanics, QMPs, QPs and DSLE trainers, cleaners, material control and administrative staff, work three shifts all year-round to provide all heavy and light rail maintenance on the NCDOT's *Piedmont* Service trains.

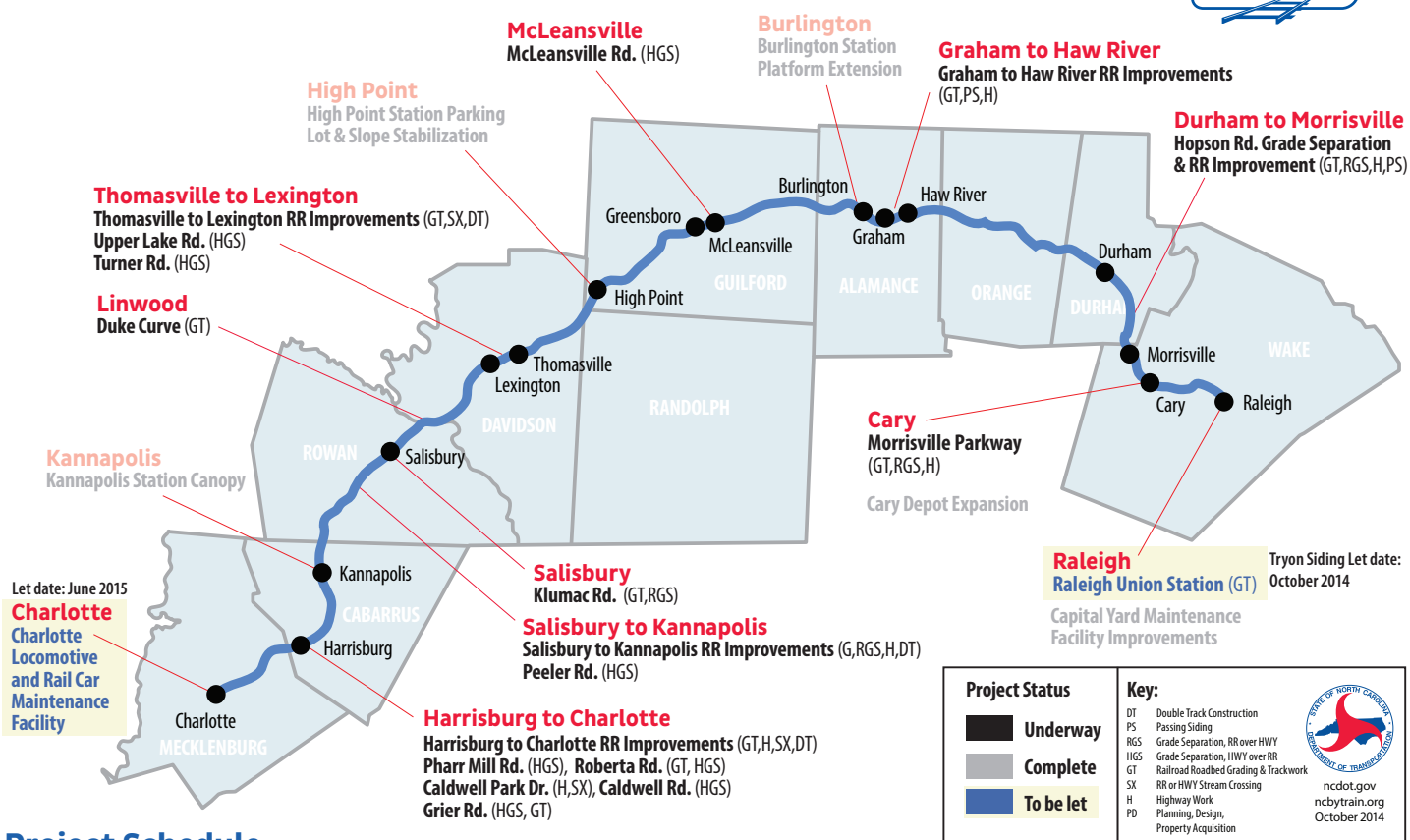
"Safety is our number one focus; not only in all of our Mechanical Services shops, yards, warehouses and on board trains, but in each and every function that RailPlan provides," said Terry B. Soesbee, President. "From providing facility management, locomotive inspection and testing for railroads and transportation agencies, to the engineering and manufacturing of modular systems, specialty products or complete railcar interiors, a culture of safety is ingrained in what we do and how we do it every day."

Soesbee joined NCDOT's Jeff Mann, Deputy Secretary for Transit, Paul Worley, Rail Director and Allan Paul, Deputy Rail Director and Jay McArthur, Senior Manager, State Corridors in Amtrak's Policy & Development Department to honor the RailPlan Team and celebrate the safety milestone.

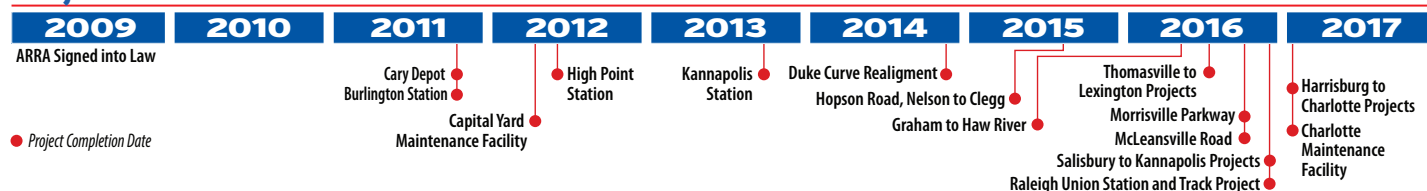
## IN MEMORY

Dr. Roger Phelps, Sr., long-time N.C. Volunteer Train Host and *Piedmont* Train Dispatcher passed away on December 3, 2014 at the age of 94. Roger served the NC Train Host Association and NC Passenger Train Program with great pride. When he retired from the association in 2010, he had served for 19 years.

# Piedmont Improvement Program – October 2014 Status Report



## Project Schedule



## ARRA Funds Spent to Date (effective 11/30/2014)

Component	Expenditure
PD&A/ROW	\$43,208,037.47
Equipment Procurement & Rebuild	\$25,939,808.65
Stations & Facilities	\$11,091,782.68
Track & Structures	\$127,603,159.30
CRISP	\$2,180,376.32
<b>Program Totals</b>	<b>\$210,023,164.42</b> of \$520M awarded FRA Grant Funds
<b>New ARRA Contracts Awarded in November: 10 contracts worth \$736,917.57</b>	

## PIP Milestones

- Cary:** Bridge construction for the Morrisville Parkway grade separation has begun. The new railroad bridge will improve safety for trains and vehicles by replacing a railroad crossing on a busy 4-lane roadway. The bridge, which is being constructed off-line from the existing track, will improve railroad alignment and allow for a future second railroad track.
- Harrisburg to Charlotte:** Saddle Creek Court was opened to traffic in November within the Haydock to Junker double track project. This new roadway replaces the Shamrock Road access to area businesses and provides a much safer crossing of the railroad and access to NC 49.
- Thomasville to Lexington:** The Hamby Creek railroad bridge on the Bowers to Lake double track project was completed in December. This new double track bridge replaces an existing structure that is over 100 years old. The completion of this bridge and other work allows track construction to begin on this 4-mile project.
- Guilford County:** Thomas & Howard private crossing was closed and alternate access provided for the businesses to the Maxfield Road state maintained road.

## Piedmont Improvement Program Project Photos – November 2014



P-5201 Morrisville Parkway grading



P-5201 Morrisville Parkway, west approach to bridge



U-4716 Hopson Road bridge construction



U-4716 Hopson Road bridge construction



P-5205 Graham to Haw River, utility work



P-5205 Graham to Haw River Grading

## Piedmont Improvement Program Project Photos – November 2014



C-4901 Bowers to Lake - Removal of old grade crossing beside new Upper Lake Road bridge



C-4901 Bowers to Lake - Sub-ballast



U-3459 Klumac Road



P-5206 Reid to N. Kannapolis - Peeler Road bridge construction



P-5208 Haydock to Junker - Caldwell Road Bridge



P-5208 Haydock to Junker - Sub-ballast